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"The White Rose"

—OF—

MEMPHIS.

BY W. C. FALKNER.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I was in my office early the next morning after I had the difficulty with Harry, gloomily ruminating with myself about the unhappy events of the previous day, and wondering what was to be the result. I had passed a sleepless night—a miserable, wretched night, and was nervous and irritable when I arrived at the office. I had left home without eating breakfast—in fact I had not tasted food since dinner on the previous day. I had no appetite; my temples throbbled and my cheeks seemed to be on fire; I was really ill in body and mind. I had not been at the office five minutes when a little negro boy came hurriedly in and handed me a letter. I saw in an instant it was from Lottie; I broke the envelope and read it eagerly:

"DEAR EDDIE—For heaven's sake keep out of Harry's way to-day. He is crazy with passion, and refuses to listen to reason. I have never known him to exhibit such ungovernable rage before. He makes the most horrible charges against you, and swears he will kill you. Oh, darling, what on earth does it all mean? Poor Lott! he did not sleep a wink last night; but walked the floor all the time, muttering curses against you. There is some awful secret at the bottom of it all—some strange, unaccountable mystery. I fear some scheming enemy of yours has been planning your destruction. By all means avoid a meeting with Harry until the matter can be investigated. Mr. Rockland unfortunately is not at home, else I would go to him for advice. Oh, Eddie darling, language is inadequate to describe my feelings. I was on my knees the live-long night praying for you and my poor brother. My reliance is on God; and, Eddie darling, let me beg you to trust in Him too. He will clear the dark clouds from our sky if we put our faith in Him. Harry is so different from what he used to be—so completely metamorphosed. He used to be so gentle, so kind, always grieving for others' troubles, never thinking of himself—so devoted to you—so loving to me; but alas! what is he now? All passion—terrible passion—gloomy, irritable, suspicious, jealous and quarrelsome; and, poor boy, I am afraid he is losing his reason. I thought I was brave—I imagined no misfortune could overcome me, but this blow has been too heavy for me; this awful suspense is more than I can bear. If you see stains on this sheet of paper, you know what made them. My eyes have not been dry since the sad occurrences of yesterday. I was astonished when I looked in the mirror this morning; my eyes are as red as fire and greatly swollen, and the color has fled from my cheeks. They have been trying to make me believe my darling is untrue to me, but they never can do that—I am not a bit jealous—I think I know all the goodness of his noble heart, and I never shall believe that he would deceive me. But I must close now, for my time is limited. Again, I beseech you not to meet Harry to-day.

Your true, faithful

LOTTIE."

N. B. I have stamped the paper with a hundred kisses, all for my Eddie.

LOTTIE."

"The part of the letter that referred to Harry's conduct tended greatly to increase my misery, while the sweet expressions of love and faith came like airs of heaven to soothe my bleeding heart. What consolation it brought to my troubled soul! My Lottie trusted me, and I could face any adverse fortune when I knew that she had confidence in me. I had scarcely finished reading Lottie's letter when Mr. Heartsell walked into the office and, without speaking, handed me a note from Harry. If a bolt of thunder had knocked the roof off of the house over my head, it would have startled me less than the contents of the note; but I have it here now and will read it to you:

"DOCTOR EDWARD DEMAR, SIR: Circumstances not necessary for me to mention, have rendered it neces-

sary for me to inform you that you and I can no longer live in the same city. I will go further and inform you that the time has come when you must answer for your dishonorable conduct. If you have any sense of honor left you will readily accord to me the only satisfaction that I require. To be plain, I DEMAND that you name a time and place, without the limits of the State, when and where we can settle the matters of difference between us. My friend Heartsell is authorized to arrange preliminaries with you, or any friend you may choose to represent you.

Respectfully,

H. WALLINGFORD."

"Mr. Heartsell," said I, endeavoring to keep control of my feelings, "Am I to understand this as a challenge to fight a duel?"

"The language used is very plain, sir, and such was the intention of my friend when he wrote it."

"But I am opposed to the barbarous practice of dueling. The laws of the land prohibit it, public sentiment condemns it, and if I was not opposed to dueling, I could not fight Harry Wallingford. I would not hurt him for every thing in the world, and why should he wish to take my life? I never injured him—I love his sister as I do my life—she is my betrothed bride; and I would as soon think of killing myself as him."

"That, sir, is a matter with which I have nothing to do; but you are mistaken when you say public sentiment condemns the code of honor. I think the very reverse of that is true; because it is considered disgraceful to back down when challenged. The man who refuses to fight when challenged is branded as a coward, and honorable men shun him as such. Did public sentiment condemn Henry Clay, S. S. Prentiss, Albert S. Johnson, Gen. Jackson and a thousand others I might name?"

"Yes, but public sentiment has undergone a great change since then; and our laws did not prohibit dueling then either."

"Doctor Demar can you name any one who has ever been punished for fighting a duel?"

"I am sorry to be compelled to answer in the negative."

"I dare say that you will admit that the reason is owing to public sentiment; but to the point—what answer do you wish me to convey to my friend Wallingford?"

"Give me one hour to consider on the matter, and to take the advice of my friends."

"Certainly; but it will be considered dishonorable to mention the matter to more than one friend, and were you to do so, it might cause the civil authorities to get hold of the affair, which you know would serve to widen the breach between you and my friend, Wallingford."

"Mr. Heartsell, do you know what has caused Harry Wallingford to become offended with me?"

"Oh, yes, Doctor Demar; your little secret is out, and you must face the music."

"What do you mean by my little secret being out?"

"Pshaw, Demar, don't undertake to brass it out that way; but never mind, I'll call again at the end of an hour and get your answer. By the way, Demar, you had better accept the challenge, as that might be the shortest road to an adjustment of this business; because if you refuse to meet Wallingford on the field, he will force you to fight him on the streets. But if you consent to meet him, a few rounds may satisfy him, when the matter could be settled, but if you decline, I dread to think of the consequences. You know his fiery temper as well as I do; he is very rash and inconsiderate, and is very much enraged against you. Think of these things when you are considering the proper answer to be sent. For the present, good morning; I'll call again for your answer."

For full ten minutes, I sat silently gazing at space, and pondering over the situation, perfectly at a loss as to what course would be best for me to pursue. One thing I had made up my mind that I never would under any consideration draw one drop of Harry Wallingford's blood. I never would point a loaded pistol at his body—I would as soon think of shooting out my own brains as his. But I knew that something must be done, and that without delay. Who should I go to for advice was the next question to be considered. I first thought of Doctor Dodson; but he was get-

ting old, and was by nature very excitable; and I decided that it was best not to mention the matter to him. At last I concluded to submit the matter to General Calloway who was a personal friend who had done many acts of kindness for me during my boyhood. I knew he was brave and noble-hearted, and had often succeeded in settling affairs of honor, without letting the parties resort to arms. General Calloway was a man whose opinions were respected by the community, and he was personally popular with every one who knew him; and I knew that if any one could bring about a reconciliation between Harry and I, he was the man to do it. So I went directly to his quarters and stated the case to him, and requested him to assist me.

"Let it be understood at the start, General," said I, "that I will under no circumstances shoot at Harry Wallingford; but if you think it best for me to stand up and let him shoot me, I will do it. No man knows whether he is a coward or not until he is tried; but I am vain enough to believe that I can stand up and let him shoot at me if the matter can not be adjusted without it."

"What is the cause of the trouble between you and Wallingford?" the General enquired.

"I have not the most remote idea; and the strangest part of the whole matter is, they refuse to tell me. If I have given cause of offense, I am ignorant of it; but Wallingford is so overmastered with passion that he will not listen to one who demands any explanation."

"Very well, Demar," said the General, "leave the matter in my hands and I'll settle it without a resort to arms. Meantime you go across the State line into Mississippi and take lodgings near Horn Lake on the line of the Mississippi and Tennessee railroad. You had better go down there this evening; and I will answer Wallingford's note in which I shall promise him a meeting to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. I have always found it much easier to bring about an amicable settlement of such cases, on the field, than in the city; and I never have yet failed to secure an adjustment, where either one of the parties desired it. But when both parties mount their high horses, then we encounter trouble. We will make Wallingford then listen to reason; we will first demand of him a full statement of the grievances of which he complains, and then we will know how to start about making a settlement. Sit down a moment, Demar, as I'll write the answer to be sent."

"I took a seat until General Calloway wrote the following:

HARRY WALLINGFORD, DEAR SIR—Your note of this date, demanding of me the designation of a time and place without the limits of this State for the purpose of discussing certain matters of difference between us, was handed to me by Mr. Heartsell. I have the honor to reply to name Horn Lake, Mississippi, as the place, and ten o'clock to-morrow morning as the time; which I hope will suit your convenience.

Any other preliminaries, which you may desire to have arranged, may be done on my part by my friend, Gen. Calloway. Very respectfully,

EDWARD DEMAR.

"Now, Demar, you go to the live ry stable, get a horse and buggy, and go to Horn Lake to-night. Don't lodge in the town, nor don't let any one know your business; in fact, you had better conceal yourself in the country near the village. I will come down early in the morning, when I feel confident we shall have no difficulty in securing a reconciliation between you and Wallingford."

This assurance greatly increased my expectations, and I left Gen. Calloway with new hopes springing up in my bosom. As soon as I reached my office, I wrote a long letter to Lottie; and, what it was finished, I sealed and directed it to her, then gave it to our drug-store clerk and directed him to give it to Lottie at eight o'clock on the next evening—provided I did not return by that time. "Mr. Todd," said I as I handed the letter to him, "I am going a short journey and hope to be back to-morrow evening. If, however, I do not return by eight o'clock on to-morrow evening you will deliver this letter to Miss Wallingford with your own hands. You

(CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE)

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" Stevenson,	2:30 pm	6:00 pm
" Chattanooga,	5:00 pm	7:30 pm
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